



May 21, 2004

Middletown man admits using Navy officer's credit card

James Chantre stole a captain's coat and wallet during Mass at the Chapel of Hope on the Newport Naval Base

James Chantre, 58, of Middletown, has pleaded guilty in federal court to credit card fraud, admitting that he fraudulently used a Navy captain's credit card to obtain money from Western Union. Chantre admitted that he stole the officer's coat and wallet during Mass at the Newport Naval Base Chapel of Hope and then used the chapel phone to call Western Union.

The Office of the United States Attorney announced the guilty plea, which Chantre entered on May 19 before U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith in U.S. District Court, Providence. Chantre, of 283 Forest Avenue, remains free on bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for August 20.

At the plea hearing, Lieutenant Kevin Gerrity, a Navy Judge Advocate General prosecutor, said that, had the case gone to trial, the government would have proven that, on November 1, 2002, Chantre accompanied his mother to the Chapel of Hope for the All Saints Day Mass. During the Mass, Chantre left the service area and went into the Chapel office, where he stole a female Navy captain's London Fog overcoat, which contained the captain's wallet.

Using one of the captain's credit cards, Chantre called Western Union on the Chapel office phone and, passing himself off as the card owner, persuaded Western Union to wire \$500 to an acquaintance in New Mexico, charging the wire transfer and fees to the captain's card.

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Chantre pleaded guilty to two charges, credit card fraud and larceny under \$1,000. The statutory maximum penalty for credit card fraud is three years imprisonment; the statutory maximum penalty for larceny under \$1,000 is one year imprisonment. Federal sentencing is determined on the basis of guidelines that rely on such factors as the specific nature of an offense and a defendant's criminal background, if any.

Naval Station Newport Police investigated the case. Lieutenant. Gerrity is prosecuting it, with assistance from Assistant U.S. Attorney Terrence P. Donnelly.

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